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HEADQUARTERS 159TH ENGINEER GROUP (CONST) APO 96491



ECB-3

112 August 1966 1

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SUBJECT: Operational Report for Quarterly Period anding 31 July 1966, Reports Control Symbol CSFOR-65.

THRU:

Commanding General. . 18th Engineer Brigade

APO 96307

THRU:

Commanding General United States Army, Vietnam ATTN: AVC (History)

APO 96307

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Department of the Army Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development

Washington, D.C. 20310

Section 1, Significant Organization or Unit Activities.

1. GENERAL:

a. This report covers the following headquarters and units with arrival and operational dates in theater as indicated.

OPERATIONAL ARRIVAL WIT 30 Oct 65 HHC, 159th Engr Gp (Const) 30 Oct 65

46th Engr Bn (Const)

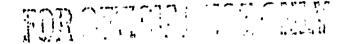
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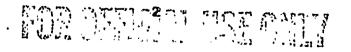


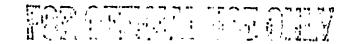
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UNIT	ARRIVAL	OPERATICIAL
169th Engr Bn (Const)	30 May 66	10 Jun 66
103d Engr Co (CS)	5 Feb 66	27 Feb 66
617th Engr Co (PB)	4 Nov 65	11 Nov 65
536th Engr Dot (PC)	5 Feb 66	11 Mar 66

b. Individual reports by each of the two battalions are forwarded separately.

- c. This report presents information covering the Group HHC and the separate companies, and offers consolidated recommendations in regard to all elements listed in para la.
- 2. Movements: During the report period the following moves were accomplished within the Group:
- a. 4 squads of A/168th Engr En (Cbt) moved from Di An to Phu Loi on 4 May 1966.
- b. Company D/169th Engr Bn (Const) arrived in-country from Okinawa on 6 May and was operational by 8 May 1966.
- c. The 169th Engr Bn (Const) minus D Coarrived in-country from Okinawa during the period 12-30 May and became fully operational on 10 June.
- d. C/168th Engr Bn (Cbt) moved from Long Binh to Phuoc Vinh cn 1 June 1966 (Admin Transfer).
- e. B/588th Engr Bn (Cbt) moved from Phuoc Vinhato Long Binh on 1 July 1966 (Admin. Transfer).
- f... B/588th Engr Bn (Cbt) moved from Long Binh to Cu Chi during the period 10-20 June.
- g. 171st Engr Det (WD) departed Di An to move to Nha Trang on 13 June 1966.





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h. 156th Engr Det (WD) arrived Di An on 30 June and was operational on 4 July 1966.

- i. The following units were deteched from the 159th Engr Gp and attached to the 79th Engr Gp on 20 July 1966:
 - (1) 168th Engr Bn (Cbt)
 - (2) 588th Engr Bn (Cbt)
 - (3) 362d Engr Co (LE)
 - (4) 557th Engr Co (LE)
 - (5) 38th Engr Det (WD)
 - (6) 156th Engr Det (WD)
 - (7) 917th Engr Det (WD)

3. PERSONNEL:

a. The consolidated strengin figures for the entire 159th Engr Cp are as follows:

(1) 31 May 1966

_	Officer	<u>wo</u>	EM	Total
Authorized:	130	· 21	2810	2961
Assimedt	*158	** 23	2755	2936

- * Including 22 assigned not joined.
- ** Including 2 assigned not joined.

Minimum Transport

(2) 30 June 1966

	Officer	WO	<u>EM</u>	Total
Authorized:	164	29	ئى 1كىر	3854
Assignod:	*191	₩x32	3499	3722

* Including 22 assigned not joined.

** Including 2 assigned not joined.

. (3) 20 July 1966 following transfer of 168th Engineer Pn, 588th Engineer Pn and 557th Engineer Co (IE) to the 79th Engineer Group.

	Officer	WO	EM	Total
Authorizeds	94	21	2123	2238
Assigned:	#101	₩ ₩28	21.94	2323

* Including 4 assigned not joined.

** Including 6 assigned not joined.

(4) 31 July 1966

	Officer	<u>wo</u>	EM	Total
Authorized:	94	. 21	2123	2238
Assigned:	* 102	1111 27	2 2 ; 0	2369

* Including h assigned not joined.

** Including 6 assigned not joined.

b. The Group is presently employing approximately 1300 indigenous personnel.

h. OPERATIONS:

a. Construction operations within the Group during the .: past 3 months may be summarized by major construction location as follows:

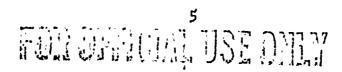
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- (1) Long Binh-Activities in the Long Binh sub- area can be divided into roughly 6 project categories:
- (a) II FFORCE V: At the beginning of the period, areas for the Headquarters, HHC, Corps Arty Headquarters, HHD, and and MP Company had been completed. Work had started on the Signal Battalion and Radio Research Battalion areas. During the period the Signal and RR Battalion areas have been completed to standard 3. Improvement of these areas to standard h is continuing on a self-help basis. In addition, work is now complete to standard 3 on the Aviation Group Headquarters area and is roughly 50% complete to standard 3 on the 79th Engr Gp Area. In conjunction with construction of the 12th Av Gp area, 11 helipts have been treated with peneprime and covered with PSP for use in parking Group helicoptors. Work has started on the community facilities area. A PX building is in the final stages of completion and a dispensary is complete except for the electrical wiring and the provision of shielding material forte X-ray machine.
- (b) Ammunition Supply Depot and Log Dopot: Based on greatly expanded ammunition stockage levels, a requirement was generated in mid-June by the lst Log Command to expand the Ammunition Supply Depot by 71 pads (100'x100') ASAP. This diverted the major part of herizontal effort available in the IB area to work on the ASD. Since mid-June is pads have been completed and turned over (as of 31 July). This made llk total pads available for storage at the end of July. The total requirement forecasted for December 1966 is 199 pads. Four ea 70'x140' warehouse buildings have been completed in the Quartermaster Depot area in addition to two 40'x100' warehouses being used for class I, II, & IV storage. A bakery building measuring 20'x170' has been completed and is now producing 6,000 leaves of bread a day.
- (c) Cantonment Construction: Work is now virtually complete on a Hendquarters area for the CO, Long Binh Sub Area Command, and his staff. This area consists of a Headquarters Bldg, a Post Office (4000 sq ft), a Finance Bldg (6000 sq ft), a dispensary, a dental clinic and cantonment facilities for Hq, IBSAC (Long Binh Sub-Area Command).
- 1. The 64th QM Dn (POL) has been located along the base read of the LB triangle in an area formerly occupied by the 2/18th Infantry. Intrines and showers have been constructed and work on a mess hall is approximately 50% complete.



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2. Following the unit's arrival in-country the 169th Engr Bn placed a pertian of their construction affort on completion of their cwn area to standard 3. This was accomplished in the remarkable time of only 10 days. Fart of this can be attributed to the fact that D Co preceded the unit by almost 30 days and completed most of the horizontal work. The mest important factor, however, was that the 169th pre-cut all materials in Ckinawa before shipping out. This resulted in great economy of effort and allowed the 169th to mobilize in the mimimum amount of time. The unit's cantenment is now at 85% standard 4.

3. Cantenment areas to stendard 3 were completed during the period for the 48th TC Gp, 68th Med Gp, 58th Med Bn, and the 74th Med Bn.

(d) Facilities for Units moving out from Saigen:

l. 90th Roplacement: In late April impetus was given to the movement of units out of the Saigen area as quickly as possible. Primary among the units to be moved was the 90th Roplacement Center located on Tan Son Nhut Air Ease. Clearing work began in early May and the area was occupied during the first week in June. The project consists of 4 areas. At present two of the areas are essentially complete, and the third area is approximately 50% complete. The facility is fully operational and processing upto 560 people. daily.

2. M? Steckade: Work on the MP stockade was slowed in the early part of the period due to higher priority projects. The first phase of the project is new well on its may to completion, and will be occupied in the near future. Laterite was applied to the area and double cyclone fence around 2 of the 3 area compartments has been erected.

(e) Medical Facilities:

1. 93d Evac Hospital: Thisfacility is complete with the exception of a Contral Medical Sterilization building and the completion of all covered walk-ways between buildings.

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2. 24th Evac Hospital: Workbegan on this project on 5 July, and ultimately the hospital will be a 400 bed unit. Intrines and showers were initially installed for the 24th Evac personnel arriving from CONUS. Erection of round-wall quonsets (201x481) for operational and ward facilities is now underway and the projectis an estimated 20% complete.

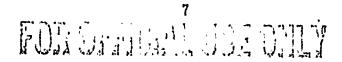
3. Dispensaries: As noted previously dispensives are being constructed as part of the Long Binh Sub-Area Headquarters complex and as part of the II FFORCE V development.

(f) Barge Off-loading Facilities: Due to the congested status of the Saigon Port area, plans were formulated in early May to develope as many expedient barge off-loading sites upriver in the Long Binh-Thu Due area as possible. This temporary measure was designed to provide a facility with an expected life of 6 months which would allow single cranes to work directly off of the bank and unload. Finding suitable sites for such off-loading points proved very difficult and in two of the three areas developed, semi-permanent facilities had to be constructed to overcome poor bank conditions.

l. Cogido: During the period this existing project was expanded to two additional finger piers with interconnecting walkway. By 20 June the two piers were complete and in uso.

2. Thu Duc: This location proved the only area which could really be developed in the expedient sense. Real estate rights in the area were obtained with aid from USAID. Work began on 1 June and 8 pds were complete and ready for occupancy by the 20th. Despite the high priority of this job, as late as mid-July only 2 pds were being utilized by the Terminal Gommand.

3. Song Dong Nai: Highly unstable bank conditions here caused the scrapping of the original plan to fill the area to a given grade and place pads as at Thu Duc. Several slides caused the project to be redesigned as a bulk-head using crossoted wood pile tied off to deadmen and shored with heavy timbers. Due to tricky ground conditions this project has required a great deal of patience, and based on the effort and materials required can no longer be considered an expedient solution. The bulkhead will be ready for use on or about 27 August.



- (2) Vung Tau: Construction effort presently deployed at Vung Tau consists of D/h6th Engr Bn, 536th Engr Det (PC) and the Quarry Platoon of the 103d Engr Co (CS). Nine projects were active during the period.
- (a) Ammunition Supply Depot: Work on access roads and laterite pads was completed during the period and the project is . now complete.
- (b) Cantonment: During the period work on the 200 man Engineer Base Camp was completed and the only major item remaining to be completed on the 500 ran Cantonment is the dispensary.
- (c) Flight Line Facilities: Work on Phase II of the Parking Ramp project is complete to include asphalt cutback treatment of parking space for UHIB & ID helicoptors. 16,000 cu yds of sand was hauled into area III to bring this location to grade. The haul of laterite to the area is now underway.
- (d) Port Facilities: During July, test piles were driven and data was forwarded to the contractor for design of the pier. No work as yet has been started.
- (e) Covered storage: Essentially a month was lost on this project due to missing components of the 120'x200' building. Work has now resumed on the construction of the last two bays of the building and the project is 85% complete.
- (f) Australian Log Depot: This project provided 15,000 sq yds of hardstand and access roads to be read by Australian Logistical units deploying to RVN. This project was completed on 12 July 1966.
- (g) POL Storago: One ten-thousand barrel tark was completed and tested during the priod. Three other 10,000 bbl tanks are under construction. In all, 10 ten thousand and 4 three thousand barrel tanks will be erected.
- (h) Barge Construction: The 5%th Engr Det (PC) was given the mission in May of constructing 60 TC barges for use in port operations. To date 24 barges have been completed and are being maintained by the 536th.

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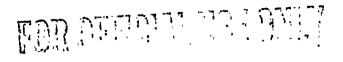
- (i) Movement of Generators: One particularly interesting mission undertaken by D/46th Engr Bn was the movement of 4 ea 500 KW generators weighing 21 tons each from the Vung Tau Port area to a StratCom site atop one of the two towering ridges in the area. Due to the sharp hair-pin curves in the primary access read to the site, this route could not be used. In order to provide access, and abandoned read winding around the far side of the ridge had to be rehabilitated. In some areas the read was blasted to provide wider clearance; in other areas fill had to be placed to provide for adequate turning radius. Either side of the read sheer drops through jungle vegetation made negotiating the read in even a jeep very dangerous. After a great deal of read repair, the 4 generators were safely shuttled to the top of the ridge during the period 14-17 June 1966.
- (3) XUAN LCC: During the latter part of June one plateon from the 169th Engr Bn (Const) was committed in this location to prepare cantonment areas for a composite artillory battery and a 155 gun battalion. Horizontal work was to be completed by the ARVN 10th Engr Bn. The plateon was to do vertical work. As the situation developed the burden of the horizontal effort also fell to the U.S. unit to accomplish. Latrines, showers, and mess-halls have been provided for the composite battery and 3 batteries of the gun battalion. At present, horizontal effort is being expended on gun pad and ammo pad preparation.
- (h) Saigon: Work during the period has been limited to the preparation of a CRS (Crypto Radio Service) administrative area consisting of 3 quenset buildings and a latrine facility. Some work has been accomplished in spreading and leveling material delivered on contract for the construction of an aircraft perking ramp facility at Tan Sor Nhut. Work on this project has been tampered however by the failure of units in the project area to remove bladder tanks and aircraft parts which obstruct further work.
- b. COMBAT SUPPORT: During the poriod contat support has been limited to support of LOC improvements by providing panel bridge and technical assistance.
- (1) During the first 15 days of May the 617th Engr Co (PB) supported LCC maintenance operations in conjunction with operation Burmingham conducted by the 1st Inf Division in the Tay Ninh Area. Although it was initially anticipated that parel bridge would be required to up grade the existing LCC, no panel bridge was actually placed during the operation. The 617th was used primarily to haul laterite to backfill culverts and improve abutments.

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- (2) During June the 617th Engr Co supported the 1st EngrBn in up-grading bridges along highway 16. 190ft of TS bridge and 200 ft of DS bridge were constructed.
- (3) On 26 July the manel bridge company was committed to replace a 100 ft TS span which had been demolished by overleading. This repair was done in conjunction with B Co, lst Engineers and completed on 28 July.
- (4) During the week ending 27 July, D/46th Engr Bn provided 23 men, one bucket loader, 2 lo-beds and a crawler tractor with blade to rehabilitate a road vicinity YS 500 565.



Section 2, Commanders Observations and Recommendations

- 1. Part I, Observations (Lossons Learned) See Annex A
- 2. Part II, Recommendations
- a. The construction effort continues to maximum capacity and accomplishments are contributing greatly to the overall effort. However, the requirements continue to outpace the engineer cambility. All oritical requirements continue to be satisfied, but there is a delay to the customer for the less essential needs.
- b. The foundation problem in this area overtaxes the horizontal effort of the construction battalions. Poor subgrade conditions and the relative flatness of the terrain complicates the drainage requirement. Vertical effort is fully employed, but less oritical. This is partially relieved by the extensive solf-help program undertaken by all units with some technical engineer advice.
- c. The supply situation has improved markedly and few jobs are hald up for any appreciable time because of shortages. The few items which do cause delay in some dates of completion are acetylene, shower heads, water containers, spring valves and electrical wiring.
- d. Although loss critical to this Group since the reassignment of two combat battalions to a newly arrived Group, the air capability available is still less than desirable. Reconnaissance for luture operations and normal commander and staff visits overtaxes the present support.
- e. The weather during this period has significantly limited the construction effort, particularly the earthwork. The local laterite is a good select material for base courses, but cannot be worked properly during rain while in a loose condition. Since the drying time after a typical moonsoon downpour is extensive, many construction hours are lost.
- f. The practice of equipping all incoming units with WABTCC has greatly expedited the mobilization of units once they arrive in country. In particular, those units which have arrived with pre-cut materials (for tents kits, etc) have become operational almost immediately. I feel that where possible, co-ordination should be made between deploying units in CONUS and nearby engineer units to arrange pre-cutting of latrines, showers, tent kits, and mess facilities. This would allow semi-permanent facilities to be erected on a self-help

Section 2, Commanders Observations and Recommendations

basis with a minumim diversion of in-country engineer effort. It would also afford engineer units in CONUS a good opportunity to become familiar with the standard type buildings being erected in RVN and the cutting schedule for these typical buildings.

K. E.m. Conse

R. E. MC CONTELL Lt Col, CE Commanding

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ANNEX A
LESSONS LEARNED

1. PERSONNEL

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ITEM: Interchange of Orricors & Key NCO's

DISCUSSION: Sixty to seventy percent of the personnel arriving within . a unit will have the same DEROS upon completion of a full tour in Vietnam. With a large turnover of personnel at one time the continuity of effort is adversely affected.

OBSERVATION: Plan for the maximum rotation of officers from steff to command and vice versa. Key NCO's should be interchanged from Group to Battalion and vice versa.

FOD C-

2. OPERATIONS

16

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ITEM: Expedient Tin Cutter

DISCUSSION: Due to the awayardness of working with a tin shears (if available), large requirements for tin cutting, as in the case of tin. roof valleys, may be accomplished more efficiently with expedient equipment.

OBSERVATION: The following expedient does the job very woll:

Lay a 2x8 RL on the ground perpendicualr to your front. Lay a small, though flexible, wire down the length(centered) of the 2x8. Fasten one end of the wire to the 2x8. Fasten a nail(for a bandle) on the other end of the wire. Lay 2 each 2x4's flat on top of the 2x8 and hinge them to the 2x8 on the same end to which the wine is fastened. Space the 2x4's so as to allow the handle to pass between them. Fasten the other ends of the 2x4's together so that they both swing simultaneously. To use, place a piece of tim over the wire, which should be laying on the 2x8. Swing the 2x4's down on top of the tim. Stand on the 2x4's, grasp the handle on the wire and pull so that the wire will tear the tim along the line defined by the spaced 2x4's. Result: A straight quick cut.

3. TRAINING AND ORGANIZATION

4. INTELLIGENCE

(pot publishED)

5. LOGISTICS

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ITEM: Utilization of Motal Pallets

DISCUSSION: Cement is being received on metal m llets. Disposal of these pallets had presented a problem, as there are no obvious uses other than as storage platforms. Since pallets could not be broken up for component materials or burned, plans have been made to utilize them as flooring for tents by wiring them together and covering them with 1-inch decking. Another possible use would be as concrete forces replacing large wooden supporting members.

OBSERVATION: Utilization of these pallots will result in saving lumber which at times is a critical item.

II Com.

ITEM: MTOE (S-4 Yard)

DISCUSSION: The Group S-4 is sometimes required to request, receive, store and issue supplies not scheduled for immediate issue and construction by any subordinate unit. Pacific Architects and Engineer (PAE), who have a contract with the U.S. Army in Vistnam for a class IV depot, are not able to store and issue project stocks of this nature as required, due to a shortage of either personnel or storage facilities.

OBSERVATION: Take steps to authorize additional personnel and equipment either in Group S-4 and/or Enttalion S-4. Expand the Class IV depot presently under contract by Pacific Architects and Engineer with qualified personnel and facilities for receipt, storage and issue to project stocks as required or bring into the long Binh area on Engineer Supply Point Detachment who could operate a Class IV yard of this type.

22

6. OTHER

ENGINEERING

ITEM: Excessive Clearing

DISCUSSION: A tendency has been shown for constructing and tenant units to remove all vegetation and attempt to shape land to conform to a rectangular layout. This has resulted in the removal of existing trees and of excessive clearing of natural ground cover. The results have been dust, mud, and drainage problems. A few cantonments have been laid out to conform to existing patterns of groves of trees and land forms. This has resulted in shaded areas, few, if any, drainage problems and relatively pleasant appearing compounds.

OBSERVATION: Construction planning should allow for the preservation of protective vegetation when possible.

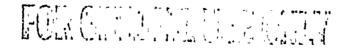
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ENGINEERING

ITEM: Building Roof Vents

DISCUSSION: Buildings were designed and constructed during the dry season. Roof vents were provided to aid in circulation of air. With the advent of the rainy season, it was found that in many instances the wind carried the rain almost hoxizontally. Insufficient overhang had been provided and the rain literally poured through the vents. A new design which provides approximately 2 ft overhang with a 7 inch clearence has been found to be effective. Roof and rafter pitch is 6: 12

OBSERVATION: Roof vents are necessary but proper allowances must be made for the monsoon rains.



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CHAPLAIN

ITEM: The establishing of a chaplain's fund

DISCUSSICM: In an area where different commands are involved: where several types of money are used; where several National Banks must be used; where there are no bonding facilities; and where there is a language barrier many problems arise:

- l. The unit responsible for the real estate of the area should cut the orders since the senior commander will change from unit as commanders are transferred.
- 2. The sonior chaplain (area chaplain) must receive cooperation from all chaplains of the area and it is best that he be the president and therefore, select the custedian.
- 3. There are no local bonding facilities. Bonding can be secured from American International Underwriters Ltd, 12 Queens Road, Contral, Hong Kong, for \$5,000.00 at the rate of \$38.00 per year.
- 4. The fund works best when using two accounts: A piaster account with the Bank of Tokyo, Saigon, and an MPC account with Bank of America, San Francisco, California.
- 5. MPC taken at a designated offering is supposed to be converted at the rate of 80 piasters per US Dollar. Therefore much of the offering is lost in conversion. When we requested the toops give only piasters for designated offering, we found that the amount of the offering dropped approximately 50%
- 6. We found that all fund council meetings should be scheduled near the end of the month was to the delay in the custodian receiving his monthly statement from the bank.
- 7. We found it to be more orderly when the chaplain wrote out his own receipt and asked the local merchant to sign same.

OBSERVATION: An area chaplains: fund can be established in Vietnam but one should be aware of the problems before he attempts to extablish same.

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CHAPLAIN

ITEM: Civic Action Projects

DISCUSSION: There must be close coordination among all units in the area concerning the civic action program. We realize that the civic action activities of a particular unit are the responsibility of the Civic Action Officer. However, by the very nature of their ewn activities, most chaplains are involved in civic action work to varying degrees—some even, to being Civic Action Officers.

- l. We found that some projects were receiving much aid from several military units while some other projects were receiving little or no aid.
- 2. We found that when a large cash gift was given to local leaders, many times it was mis-used. Example: \$800.00 was given to a priest in a local orphanage where food and clothing were greatly needed. The priest built a beautiful \$800.00 chapel with the gift.

OBSERVATION:

- . 1. All civic action projects in a given district need to be coordinated with the senior advisor to the District Chief.
- 2. When a large sum of money is given to a local leader, the disbursement of said money should be closely supervised by the Civic Action Officer or the Chaplain concerned.

Ellin.

ENGINEERING

ITEM: Fire Prevention

DISCUSSION: An examination of various cantonments demonstrates that in many cases they have been laid out and constructed with tent and building spacing that does not meet the stringent requirements of recently published fire safety regulations. This is attributed to the late publication of regulations and units being assigned an area of pre- established dimensions requiring that facilities be fitted in as well as possible. Area available was limited by real estate requirements and the heavy commitment of engineer units.

OBSERVATION: Many cantonments will not meet requirements although spacing will permit ready access by firefighting equipment.

MATHEMANCE

TEEM: Hydreulic Hoict Pump gasket for the Mila Truck

DISCUSSION: The Hydraulic Hoist Pump Gasket is made of very thin paper gasket material that does not hold up under sustained operations.

OBSERVATION: A gasket was fabricated using 010 inch aluminum stock, and the rolts were torqued to 120 Ft List. Since this modification there has been no further trouble with the hoist pump.

Allan ()